

LISTING OF THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Claims 1-2 (canceled).

3. (currently amended) ~~The method according to claim 2A~~ a method for controlling the amount of time a user spends connected to a data communication network, the method comprising:

associating the user with an age group when the user connects to the data communication network;

calculating a user's connection time that represents at least an amount of time that the user is connected to the data communication network;

comparing the user's connection time with information which represents appropriate connection times for different age groups;

automatically interrupting the user's connection to the data communication network when the user's connection time exceeds the appropriate connection time for the user's age group,

wherein the step of calculating the user's connection time comprises calculating the sum of one or more connections established by the user during a given time interval; and

[[,]] further comprising calculating an amount of elapsed time between one of the user's connections to the data communication network and a subsequent connection, and multiplying the amount of elapsed time by a constant according to the age group of said user.

4. (previously presented) The method according to claim 3, further comprising authorizing an additional user connection if the product of the calculated elapsed time and the constant is not less than a duration of the subsequent connection.

Claim 5 (canceled).

6. (currently amended) ~~The method according to claim 5~~A method for controlling the amount of time a user spends connected to a data communication network, the method comprising:

associating the user with an age group when the user connects to the data communication network;

calculating a user's connection time that represents at least an amount of time that the user is connected to the data communication network;

comparing the user's connection time with information which represents appropriate connection times for different age groups; and

automatically interrupting the user's connection to the data communication network when the user's connection time exceeds the appropriate connection time for the user's age group,

wherein the step of automatically interrupting the user's connection further comprises determining whether a sum of durations of connections established by the user during a given time interval exceeds a maximum connection time that is allowable for the user's age group, and further wherein the information representing maximum allowable connection times according to the user's age group is determined in advance by a data communication network service provider.

7. (previously presented) The method according to claim 6, wherein the information representing the maximum allowable connection times according to the user's age group is predefined by the user .

Cancel claims 8-11.

12. (currently amended)~~—The system according to claim 11~~A system for controlling the amount of time a user spends connected to a data communication network, the system comprising:

a user profile that associates the user with an age group;

a connection module that references the profile when the user connects to the data communication network;

a time calculation module that calculates a user's connection time to represent at least an

amount of time that the user is connected to the data communications network;

a comparison module that compares the user's connection time with a database that identifies appropriate connection times for different age groups; and

an interruption module that automatically interrupts the user's connection to the data communication network when the user's connection time exceeds the appropriate connection time for the user's age group,

wherein the time calculation module calculates the sum of one or more connections established by the user during a given time interval, and further wherein the time calculation module further calculates an amount of elapsed time between one of the user's connections to the data communication network and a subsequent connection, and multiplies the amount of elapsed time by a constant according to the age group of said user.

13. (previously presented) The system according to claim 12, further comprising an authorization module that authorizes an additional user connection if the product of the calculated elapsed time and the constant is not less than a duration of the subsequent connection.

Claim 14 (canceled).

15. (currently amended) ~~The system according to claim 14~~ A system for controlling the amount of time a user spends connected to a data communication network, the system comprising:

a user profile that associates the user with an age group;

a connection module that references the profile when the user connects to the data communication network;

a time calculation module that calculates a user's connection time to represent at least an amount of time that the user is connected to the data communications network;

a comparison module that compares the user's connection time with a database that identifies appropriate connection times for different age groups; and

an interruption module that automatically interrupts the user's connection to the data communication network when the user's connection time exceeds the appropriate connection

time for the user's age group,

wherein the interruption module further determines whether a sum of durations of connections established by the user during a given time interval exceeds a maximum connection time that is allowable for the user's age group, and further wherein the maximum connection time according to the user's age group is determined in advance by a data communication network service provider.

16. (previously presented) The system according to claim 15, wherein the information representing the maximum allowable connection times according to the user's age group is predefined by the user .